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## Special Libraries, October 1912

Special Libraries Association

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# Special Libraries

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## THE BUSINESS VALUE OF A SPECIAL LIBRARY.

The special library has rapidly gained a distinct place in the business world. It is no longer an experiment. Scores of the most progressive business houses maintain such libraries and treat them as business assets. It is a recognition that the library rightly administered can serve men who are doing things as well as those who are thinking things.

Among the large business concerns which maintain special libraries as information bureaus expressly for the promotion of business are:

### Public Utilities.

Stone and Webster, Boston.  
Public Service Corporation, Newark, N. J.  
United Gas Improvement Co., Philadel-  
phia.  
H. M. Byllesby Co., Chicago.  
Commonwealth Edison Co., Chicago.  
Toronto Gas and Electric Light Co.,  
Toronto, Canada.  
Peoples Light, Gas and Coke Co., Chica-  
go.  
American Telegraph and Telephone Co.,  
N. Y.  
Boston Consolidated Gas Co.  
New England Tel. and Tel. Co., Bos-  
ton.

### Financial.

Price Waterhouse and Co., N. Y.  
Fisk and Robinson, N. Y.  
Wall Street Journal, N. Y.  
Babson System, N. Y.  
Blair and Co., N. Y.  
F. J. Lisman and Co., N. Y.  
National City Bank, N. Y.

### Manufacturing.

General Electric Co, Schenectady, N. Y.  
Studebaker Corporation, South Bend,  
Ind.  
National Carbon Co., Cleveland, O.  
Diamond Rubber Co., Akron, O.  
Goodrich Rubber Co., Akron, O.  
Bausch and Lomb, Rochester, N. Y.  
American Brass Company, Waterbury,  
Conn.  
Dodge Mfg. Company, Mishawaka, Ind.

### Insurance.

Insurance Association, Boston, Mass.  
Association of Life Insurance Pres-  
idents, N. Y.  
Prudential Life Insurance Company,  
Newark, N. J.  
Insurance Association, N. Y.  
Metropolitan Life Insurance Co, N. Y.  
Fidelity Mutual Life Insurance Co.,  
Philadelphia.

### Miscellaneous.

Arthur D. Little, Inc., Boston, (Chem-  
ists).  
Bureau of Railway Economics, Washing-  
ton, D. C.  
Engineering Societies, N. Y. C.

### Mercantile.

Wm. Fillene Sons, Boston.  
Marshall Field, Chicago.

These libraries have filled a pressing need  
in the complex relations of the factors

which enter into modern business, and production. They serve essentially the men who are formulating the policies of these concerns and carrying them out. They are the guides to keep them from doing things already better done, or of attempting a thing until the world's experience on that particular thing has been given attention.

Andrew Carnegie once said that his concern had "made many mistakes by neglecting one simple rule 'never to undertake anything new until your managers have had an opportunity to examine everything that has been done throughout the world in that department' neglect of that has cost us many hundreds of thousands of dollars and we have become wise . . . You can go through hall after hall in the patent office at Washington and see thousands of models of inventions bearing upon all branches of human industry, and ninety-nine out of every hundred would never have been placed there had the ignorant inventor had at his command such facilities as will be yours in this library."

There is in the vicinity of Berlin an institution known as the National testing laboratory. It is an institution to which any manufacturing concern, engineer, commercial firm or any one in industry may take their difficult problems. The experts first of all place before the seeker, the whole literature of the world on the subject. This is in itself the greatest service for it is true that the solution of most problems have been found somewhere if one can only find where. The library finds it, holds it in readiness and puts it into the hand of the right party at the right time. It solves problems by the published experiences of the world. Without carefully indexed sources of information, such as a special library maintains, the manager may grope along with an industrial or commercial problem without finding a solution until perhaps his business has failed. A single fact gleaned from close following of sources of information may mean thousands of dollars to a manager if he has the fact at the right time.

The undoubted success of special libraries such as described leads us to the belief that they will become more and more a factor in the solving of business, commercial and industrial problems. They are a direct outgrowth of the complexity of business.

A careful study of the suggestions presented in the various articles in this number is urged upon business men, corporations, chambers of commerce and other organizations.

#### THE LIBRARY AS A BUSINESS ASSET—WHEN AND HOW.

D. N. Handy, Librarian of The Insurance Library Association of Boston, Massachusetts.

An asset, in business, is a debt-satisfying possession. In determining business solvency Assets are set over against Liabilities, and if the former exceed the latter, the business is said to be solvent. The term Assets is applied technically to *material* possessions. But there are possessions other and even more essential than material: these are the *moral*, out of which material assets grow. At the foundation of every Business lie courage, competency, integrity, perseverance. These cannot be computed or averaged, but their commercial value is everywhere recognized.

Wherefore, let us at the outset agree that when we speak of the Library as a business-asset, we speak not of its value as so many books and pamphlets, but of its value as a contributing agency to those more fundamental possessions to which material assets owe their existence.

What then, has the Library contributed and what may it in the future hope to contribute that will add to business courage, integrity, competency, perseverance? In a word, to Business efficiency?

The answer is found in a measure in our conception of a Library and its function. Shall we then describe what we have in mind when we speak of the Library that may become a business asset?

It certainly is not *any* collection of books and pamphlets under *any* custodian and handled probably more often by the Janitor than the Manager. That is not the kind of Library that we have in mind. Our Library is a collection organized and planned for a definite end. Nothing in it is purposeless. Accession and discardure proceed hand in hand. Correlation and division of material advance together. Every process and method is subject to closest scrutiny and all are called upon to answer to the final test of efficiency. The real value of such a Library is its use; it is a tool. As a collection of books its value in the open market may not be great. If sold at a forced sale it might not bring a fortune. But in its power to help and inspire those who make the business what it is, its value is incalculable.

The measure of this value is to be sought in increasing efficiency of personnel, wider outlook, clearer vision, firmer grasp, greater fortitude.

It would be pleasant to think of the precise manner in which a Library might entrench itself in business favor, until it became admittedly indispensable. Such an ex-

perience is not uncommon. Libraries there are today—adjuncts of successful business houses—which stand on a plane of equality with every other department; whose directors are in every sense advisers; whose position in importance and dignity yields precedence to none. They add efficiency to the entire staff, and by breadth and merit bring distinction to the business they serve.

But it is not my purpose to describe in detail the ways in which the Library may justify itself as an Asset of Business. Purposely I have confined myself to broad, general lines along which the argument may safely proceed.

The asset value of a Library is dependent upon a variety of conditions some of which are, but more of which are not within the control of the Library itself. Let us see what some of these conditions are:

Foremost among them, I should say, must be a condition of receptivity on the part of Business itself. If Business does not see fit to recognize the aid that the Library can bring to it, it will be useless for the Library to try to force itself upon Business.

Again, and only second in importance is the attitude of the Library towards Business. If the Library shall cling to traditional aims; shall overestimate the importance of conventional methods; shall hold disdainfully aloof from those adaptations and changes which alone can make it useful to business, then its asset value will never be large or general.

Finally, assuming Business and the Library to agree as to their mutual helpfulness, the lines along which they are to co-operate, if the results are to be satisfying to both, must be susceptible of being easily seen and followed. We shall try in the time that remains, to consider briefly the problems which these introductory paragraphs suggest.

At no time in the history of the modern business world, has the opportunity been so favorable for a lasting alliance between the Library and Business. Business was never more complex, nor more moral. Greater wisdom is required to develop it. It is more sensitive. Results come quicker; failure follows more promptly on the heels of error—success almost anticipates the footsteps of sound judgment. Consequences are more far reaching. Disaster to one involves many—while bankruptcy carries overthrow and panic to hundreds of others.

The greater demands of Business are seen not only in the enormous growth of industrial enterprises, and the larger responsibilities of management, but in the increasing numbers of college and university men who are seeking business careers. Our leading universities, recognizing this field are organizing their own activities to cul-

tivate it, so that in Harvard, Dartmouth, Ann Arbor and other great colleges and universities in the States, we have courses in business administration leading in some cases to business degrees.

Business itself is awakening to a sense of its need and is not only aiding colleges and universities in their work, but in many cases is blazing new trails on its own account.

In England for some years the Insurance Institute of Great Britain and Ireland has provided courses of instruction in insurance. In the United States of America four years ago was organized The Insurance Institute of America, a conference body representing insurance men all over the country, which has for its main purpose the planning of courses in insurance, and the holding periodically of examinations. All with a view to the better training of young men in this field. It is done in recognition of the larger demands of present day business.

Again, an almost revolutionary change has taken place in the public attitude towards Business of every kind. It matters not what it is. The idea now is that men live for service; that men organize socially, commercially, and industrially for service. And if any organization is unable to undergo this test it must reform, or stand aside and let a better take its place. This I take it, is the interpretation of the great unrest which has possessed England and America in the last decade.

This means Business organized on a bigger and better scale—organized more efficiently and more morally. Organized not on caprice but on law—conducted not in the spirit of careless opportunism, but of social righteousness. Corporate business is coming back to the same sense of social responsibility that characterized private business when every employer treated his employe and his patron as a friend and neighbor.

All these—this increasing complexity, growing sense of social responsibility, demand for and increasing inflow of college men into business, spell opportunity for the Library as an indispensable adjunct of business enterprise. Answering for our first condition, then, it may be said that Business is in a *receptive* mood, and that it stands ready today, to welcome among its productive forces the Library organization.

But if the Library is to be truly an asset to Business enterprise, the Library itself must recognize not only its opportunity but its responsibility. The failure of the general library to lead in this work of aiding business in the solution of its problems has been inevitable. The general library aims at popular service. It is the popular subscription which maintains it. And the sat-

isfaction of a popular constituency in any city of from 25,000 to a million of inhabitants, will take the most liberal budget. Business wants its own technology; it wants pamphlets, clippings, reports—all sorts of special things which no public library with all its other obligations could ever hope to get and to classify.

Hence the need of specialized libraries and special methods. It is evident that the Special Library has a whole field of methods yet to amplify, systematize and unify.

If the Library is to help Business, it must be organized as Business is organized. It must be alert, systematic, sacrificing many times scholarship and thoroughness to speed, clearly seeing the fact that adequacy of information is the thing and organizing its means to that end. To get everything on a subject may be necessary for some purposes, and is always interesting to the bibliographer; but to get the *adequate* thing is the Business-librarian's ideal of service, and if he misses it he may wake up surprised to find his labor unappreciated. Superficial? It may be so. But it should be remembered that we Business Librarians labor to get results and not for the sake of laboring. We apply methods to accomplish ends, not to enjoy the precision of the methods.

Here the general Librarian is likely to slip into pitfalls. He cannot always understand why, if the system says go through A, B, C and D to E, he should be asked a dozen times a day to skip B, C, and D, a jump from A to E direct. But if the library is to serve Business it must do so, or it will not receive much consideration. Business is multiplying short-cuts, motion-savers, "efficiency" getters in every department: it will tolerate nothing less from the Library. It is for the Library to prove its value—to demonstrate its practical worth by adjusting itself to the business environment. It must not follow too closely the traditions of general library work. It ought to be familiar with general library methods; but it should never lose sight of the fact that general library methods were devised with an eye single to general library problems. The problems of a business library are different.

This, then, is the duty of the business library if the title to Asset-value is to go unchallenged. And the library may be certain that Business will not take it at its own appraisal but will demand to see for itself whether its claims are justified.

It is pleasing to feel that under conditions of handicap and often of inadequate support, Business Libraries in many cities are justifying their existence and are gradually making for themselves a secure place among the assets of the enterprises which

they represent. So much for the second condition of our thesis.

Finally, how are the Library and Business to co-operate for their mutual advantage.

It is evident that in this respect Business has to perform a duty even greater than we have laid upon the Library itself. If the Library is under obligation to adapt itself to the needs of business, Business is under special obligation to place its resources more completely at the disposal of the Library. It must take the Library seriously and plan for it accordingly.

The library as a tool needs to be made more effective. Because many business men who have caught the vision of an efficient management of business have failed to see the part the printed page is to play in its realization, libraries still lag far behind business offices in adequacy of organization.

Business organizes for results. To get them it concentrates responsibility; co-ordinates supervisory functions; supplies the material and moral means of achievement. It has superintendents, and foremen; chief clerks and assistants; stenographers and filing clerks; messenger and office boys. As methods develop, more attention is given to details. Specialization increases. No man's time is allowed to be wasted. Time is the great factor. The office boy may dawdle; but the man at the head of the machine may not—he must be isolated and apart. Everything comes to him. His vital forces are conserved for the main work in hand.

So all along the line. Each man according to his importance is surrounded by system—the orderly unfolding of the day's routine—intended to shield him from confusion and distractions that his mind may be concentrated on his work.

Except here and there, no business Library has anything approaching such organization as this. Library work is one of unceasing detail. It is one, too, requiring constant supervision. It should be given the means for its development.

Business fails to appreciate the ally that it might have in the well conducted library. It appreciates and at times is mildly grateful for the Library's service; but it has shown no great discernment when it came to an understanding of the means by which the service was rendered. It asks for and expects results; but has little appreciation of the price at which results must be bought.

The manager, pressed for time, impatiently demands information which only an expert can place before him, and wonders why it is not more readily given. He seldom faces the facts. If he did the answer would be forthcoming. He has spent money on a few books, periodicals, pamphlets and newspaper clippings and scampingly on a

librarian, thinking that somehow under pressure, this combination will tell him the things he wants to know.

Of course it will do nothing of the kind. A Library so organized will never become an asset of any business. And so long as it is organized in this way, it will be a *liability*—the target each year for criticism and the first to suffer cuts in the budget.

An indispensable requisite of a Business library is a librarian thoroughly conversant with the main facts of the business. He must know its theory and history. He must be freed from routine at least to the extent necessary to enable him to become an expert in the materials which he handles. He must be treated as a literary adviser and given the opportunity to develop literary discrimination and judgment in the field which he covers. Then he becomes more than a custodian of books; he is a counselor, impressing his personality upon a unique source of business inspiration, namely, the business literature of his collecting, and bringing direct to his superiors the information which they will know how to use for the good of the business as a whole.

Subordinates, working under him, will assemble, classify, card index, bulletin and distribute, while the Library itself will stand on a level with manufacturing, accounting, and selling. It will be a department of the business, organized like other departments, for efficiency.

This principle is being recognized more and more. Many of the larger business libraries have developed around the office desk of an executive whose business it was to handle the theories connected with the business. In some of the large life insurance companies vast collections have grown up about the actuarial office, usually the result of one man's enthusiasm. In other lines of business it has been in the publicity department that the Library has had its beginning, where the demand for the literature of the business and for publicity literature was most pressing.

In each case the necessity for an expert in the literature in question, to supervise its collection, has been naturally recognized. But in any case, these all resolve themselves into questions of organization and financing, questions which in the final analysis Business alone can answer.

The Library may adapt itself to Business, but it is for Business to say whether the adaptation shall be thorough going and effective.

Is the Library then, a *business asset*? My answer is that it is such, just in proportion as Business is willing to let it be. When Business shall treat it as it treats other factors of business success, discerning its possibilities of usefulness, encour-

aging and planning for its development, adapting it to the requirements of business activity, then it will justify itself unquestionably.

But it is for Business to make of it what it will. It can be a tool with which work may be done, or a burden requiring the loss of energy carrying it. The Library cannot answer the question alone.

When Business shall frankly admit that result-getting from the printed page is as much a practical possibility as result-getting from forces which business has always accustomed itself to use, then the machinery by which the printed page shall be assembled and made available for business uses will be set in motion and the Special or Business Library will come into its own.

I would not have you suppose that I regard this as wholly a problem of the future. Business has already awakened to the possibilities of Library help, and wherever it has done so with insight and courage it has answered for itself the question which we have here proposed. In banking, in finance, in engineering, in applied chemistry, in insurance and in numerous other fields, Business has set itself to the task of adapting Library methods to business needs. Special collections administered for special requirements are springing up in every large city, and the liberality with which these are beginning to be supported is in some respects an indication of Business's own estimate of their value.

#### DISCUSSION.

F. N. MORTON:—Mr Handy, in his paper says, "Business fails to appreciate the ally that it might have in the well conducted library. It appreciates and at times is mildly grateful for the library's service."

There is, unfortunately, a reason for this lukewarmness, and one for which the library, no matter how efficient, is not responsible. Take for example, an engineering concern such as that with which I am connected. The contracting and construction department shows by the cash profit at the end of the year its value to the company. Similarly, the operating department shows by the lessened cost of production per unit of output, its value as an asset. The library, on the other hand, by producing a few lines in a periodical or reference book may save the company from a costly error; but this does not show upon the balance sheet and is forgotten accordingly—until the next time. This is a handicap under which reference libraries have labored in the past and under which they will work for some time to come.

The foregoing may seem to indicate a pessimistic view on my part, but this is not the case. The fact that firms and cor-

porations are extending more and more their libraries, and are spending more and more their money upon them, both directly and indirectly, shows that an awakening is taking place and that the asset value of libraries is becoming appreciated. Hard headed corporations do not spend money on liabilities except, possibly, to turn them into assets. The library is coming into its own and will, in the not very distant future, be appreciated according to its merits. It will never be able to show a balance on the year's profit and loss statement any more than does the legal department in which, like the library, all is disbursement and nothing is receipt, but it will assume a standing comparable therewith; and there is no question as to the recognition of the standing of the legal department.

In our own case the consultation part of our work is continually on the increase, and the department is becoming, not only a bureau of information on the past history of the branches covered, but a general source of information on all subjects. In fact, much of the information needed does not exist in written or printed form at all, but has to be supplied by the knowledge and training of the librarian and his staff. I do not mean that the library is often called upon to decide in matters entirely of judgment, this would be resented, and very properly, by those whose positions keep them in immediate and direct contact with the work under consideration, although in these cases the library is consulted as to what has been done in the past under similar conditions. The particular function of which I speak is to produce uncontrovertible facts. For example, information C is needed. This does not exist as far as the available literature is concerned. Reliable experiment has, however, determined A, and the laws B of chemistry or physics, are known. By combining these and making the proper calculations, C may be deduced. The library has A and B, determines C and gives the exact information desired without trouble to the one asking the question. The latter, left to his own resources might know A or B; the fact that he does not know C shows that he does not know both A and B.

An instance may be cited as an illustration. The department was asked the horsepower that would be required to compress a million cubic feet of natural gas an hour to 300 lbs. per square inch. First, the ratio of the specific heats at constant volume and at constant temperature respectively, had to be looked up. This might be called A. Then from the formula for the power required to compress gas with an allowance for the efficiency of the compressor (B) the required power, or C, was calculated. In this case,

the inquirer did not know either A or B.

Among the subjects upon which the library has proved itself an asset, were information affecting the validity of franchise of patents both of our own and of others, processes of manufacture, past experiences in the art, recent progress applicable to our conditions, information regarding legal and commission decisions, and many others which can hardly be classified in a general list of this sort.

To give in brief an idea of the asset value of the special library, I should say that, by records of the past, it saves the expense of errors in the present, and points the way to economic developments in the future.

R. H. PACK, Toronto Electric Light Co., (Discussion by letter):—I am a great believer in special libraries being maintained by large corporations, and I do not know of any better way to make additions to this library, in order to keep thoroughly up to date, than by keeping in close touch with an Association such as yours. Through the medium of your magazine, "Special Libraries" we have more than once been enabled to obtain copies of some book or of some report or pamphlet which we have found of the greatest value.

Even in this day of great mergers and combinations, competition in business is very keen, if not to keep business from a rival concern, at least to produce a better article in a more efficient and economical way than has been done before. For this reason it is highly important that the members of an organization of a modern Company should be kept thoroughly posted in regard to the very latest developments in their business.

I suppose this applies even more particularly to the business of public service corporations in which the political factor enters to such a great extent, and speaking from my own point of view, I am satisfied that if public service corporations had sooner grasped the political and economic questions involved in their business and had properly applied the knowledge thus gained, there would not today exist to the same extent, public dissatisfaction with large corporations.

The cost of keeping up a special library is not great, and I feel that the work of your Association in providing references so helpful to the maintenance and up-building of these special libraries is excellent in every way.

#### AN OUTLINE OF THE WORK OF THE ACCOUNTING LIBRARY OF THE AMERICAN TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANY.

Miss Elizabeth V. Dobbins, Librarian.

Some two years ago it was found necessary to start a library for the use of the

Comptroller's Department of this Company. We already had a large legal library and a collection of carefully selected books were set aside in the Engineering Department for the use of the Engineers, but as neither of these two collections pertained to the work done by the Comptroller's office, they could not serve our needs.

The nucleus of the Accounting Library was a collection of books numbering about 200. These books had been bought by various people to serve an immediate use and some few were gifts. A large collection of magazines (some few bound) in the usual incomplete state which always results from allowing the binding to accumulate were also part of our heritage. After spending quite some time in sorting out the driftwood, we were glad to find that while our working stock was small in numbers, we had some first-class material to offer and consult. As our name indicates, we were especially anxious to build up in accounting and its first cousin, bookkeeping. Since then our work has been so broadened that we have added books on Economics, Finance, Scientific Management, Insurance, Telephone and Telegraph, Railroads, Statistics, Municipal and Government Ownership, Reports of various natures and a few others whose individual groups are not large enough to specify.

Our periodical list is, I think, a very complete one. As yet we have not found ourselves lacking when any reference question (which can almost always be answered by some periodical or other) comes up. Aside from the telephone, accounting and technical magazines that we ordinarily would be expected to have, we added the Journal of Political Economy, The Annals of the American Academy, the American Statistical Association, The American Economic Review and the publications of the American Economic Association. This I am sure you will all agree is a very high grade collection of reference magazines.

The library was intended to serve but one department, namely the Comptroller's; but from its very formation the calls from the other departments were so many and varied that we extended the privilege to any one in the employ of the Company, and I am glad to say we are gaining many new users from day to day.

I have not mentioned our pamphlet collection which is a large one covering a variety of subjects, principally questions on Rates for public utilities, Interstate Commerce Commission reports, decisions, and etc. and articles on the telephone and telegraph presenting many phases of each of these subjects. As our library is a reference one, we ask that all books and pamphlets borrowed be kept in the building dur-

ing working hours, so in case an immediate demand for either arises we can meet it. Our catalogue is a dictionary one and at present both the books and pamphlets are catalogued to date, the shelf list of course is a subject one.

At present we are contemplating a change of classification (I know I have the sympathy of the entire profession during this experience) and the probabilities are that we will put in Dewey. The work of a special library differs in many ways from public library work and yet the really big essentials are in operation and I know they help materially in the success of the work for if we did not know how to do things from a trained point of view, I am sure we would have many a time been found lacking in some cardinal point of library administration.

I think I can say for the library that I represent that we are a "paying asset" and must remain so in order to keep up with the other progressive and busy departments of this huge corporation. At present our collection is in the neighborhood of 1,000 books. This may seem a small number but when you remember that we strive to have only the best rather than the "best seller" the smallness of the number explains itself.

Whatever measure of success has come to the library is due in no small part to the splendid co-operation and kindly suggestions that have come from those with whom the Librarian comes directly in touch.

#### THE EARNING POWER OF A SPECIAL REFERENCE LIBRARY ON RETAIL DISTRIBUTION.

Discussion by Miss M. E. Murray.

The William Filene's Sons Company of Boston are retailers of men's, women's, children's and infant's wearing apparel and employ at present about two thousand persons. Among other innovations they have made provision for a Business Reference Library in their new building, and which is, as far as we know, the first in this line of business.

It is planned to have on file all information relating to the business and such other information as may be helpful to the management and all other employees in the discharge of their duties, such as daily papers, technical and general reference books, trade journals, newspaper clippings, and type-written material.

The library was created because there was a definite need for a central clearing house of information on the latest and best in retail distribution and because it was urgent that one department should be responsible to care for the safety and mobilize the valuable information, books and



pamphlets scattered throughout the various offices of the organization.

Now what will the earning power of this special reference library be? It will be in exact proportion to its use and efficiency based on just how well and how often it can make or save a dollar for the business. It will depend largely on how aggressive the library policy will be in creating needs and meeting the needs for its material, and although it may not be able to show quite as tangible a profit and loss statement as a merchandise department, still there should be the same effort and desire to know the stock on hand the first of the month, the purchases, the expenses of the department, the stock on hand at the end of the month (having in mind depreciation) and the sales, which would be services rendered.

The more efficiently and oftener the reference library serves the organization, the more time it saves high-priced executives, and helps the rank and file, the more certain it will become a permanent paying department of the business and make itself indispensable. This is in general how the earning value will be determined. However, if the library is to succeed, such general statements will not be sufficient.

The chances for service and making definite contributions toward business efficiency in a large retail establishment are innumerable, and especially in a progressive house like the one with which I have the honor to be associated.

But such service and such contribution must be made very definite, must be made very specific and must be applied to every member of the organization.

For some years past our company has been experimenting with profit sharing agreements, and one of the difficulties has been for general profit sharers, men and women in non-selling departments, working for the whole store, to show what has been his or her contribution toward profits.

Therefore, if a reference librarian, who would be termed a general profit sharer, fails to study position by position, just how he or she can contribute to the needs of the men and women connected with the organization, the library will not be recognized and felt as a money making investment.

It is, therefore, along these lines that the Filene reference library will be operated.

In all the initial steps and preparatory work of organizing, the methods of the legislative reference libraries are as far as possible being applied.

The work of some of the successful legislative reference libraries is divided into three main divisions—comparative, critical and constructive, and in analyzing the store material on hand, it is found that pretty

nearly all of these main divisions of reference work have in the past been practically ignored. In isolated cases, comparative work has been attempted, as, for instance, furnishing specific information from some other store on some store policy for some one manager, but it has not been disseminated and placed at the service of all. The need of having this work done has been recognized and in the future will be done through the library.

Retail distribution has its laws and policies, but the laws and policies are, to a large degree, empirical. They are the result of years of effort and experience, and what was good five years ago, may not be good today. All policies are constantly changing.

Therefore, the first work, and at present in hand, before the library can start on its aggressive mission is to tabulate, classify, index and fit for use the present valuable information scattered throughout the offices of the management, destroying everything obsolete or whatever has become a permanent part of the store organization.

For it is imperative in a fast growing business employing an increasing number of executives, that new employees should profit to the fullest extent by the experience of past years and how other people have handled problems new to us, and the library can assist very definitely by placing in their hands brief summaries on important subjects connected with the business, revised copies of duties of various position, bibliographies on important subjects related to the business, and any other material that will help them absorb in the shortest possible time the fundamentals of the business.

Perhaps it may be of interest to mention briefly what special subjects both general and technical the library must watch out for. The best way is, with apologies, to give you an idea of the personnel of the management. The Filene brothers and their partners are public spirited citizens; one brother, Mr. Edward A. Filene, with a few other men, organized the present successful Boston City Club and was largely responsible for the amalgamation of the numerous commercial organizations of the city into the present Boston Chamber of Commerce, and was chairman of the recent Metropolitan Plan Commission of Massachusetts. The other brother, Mr. A. Lincoln Filene served for three years on the State Commission for Industrial Education and is now a member of the Executive Board of the National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education, and also contributed largely in time and money to the Boston Vocational Bureau. The other partners are also serving on special com-

mittees of various organizations and are all, with the Filenes, very keenly interested in labor problems, the relations of employers to employees, and each has on his desk the best books on scientific management, as Taylor's, Gantt's, Emerson's and Brandeis'.

Therefore, first of all the business reference library will have on its shelves six or seven of the best books on scientific management, also books on organization and finance. Then will be added special books on bookkeeping, auditing, insurance, statistics, advertising, decorating, buying, selling, materials and subjects of interest to the Filene Co-operative Association (an organization consisting of all the employees and the members of the corporation each member having a single vote) such as pensions, arbitration, compulsory insurance, co-operative housing, etc.

Perhaps it might also be well to add that this association has maintained a library of all the popular fiction for the past twelve years, and no fiction will be placed in this new business reference library.

The librarian is also custodian of all the private contracts, leases and corporation records, and is expected to prepare digests of any important papers at any time.

This is what the Filene library expects to do and must arrange for resources to actually obtain and devise ways and means for the dissemination of information needed.

#### A SPECIAL TRADE LIBRARY IN SWEDEN.

##### The Swedish Export Association.

[From Consul General Ernest L. Harris, Stockholm, in Daily Consular and Trade Reports, July 16, 1912.]

On April 18 the General Export Association of Sweden celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary under the auspices of the Crown Prince. It looks back upon a quarter of a century of successful labor and has done its full share in building up the foreign commerce of the country. The objects of the association as stated in its year-book are as follows:

1. To procure new markets in Sweden and abroad for the products of the members of the association.
2. To obtain for members of the association information regarding terms of payment, prices, and other conditions connected with the export of Swedish goods.
3. To send commercial agents to foreign countries with instructions to disseminate knowledge of Swedish articles suitable for export to the different markets and also to open business connections in such markets.
4. To organize exhibitions and depots of Swedish products abroad.
5. To collect material for the establishment of a Swedish commercial museum.
6. To publish in a special periodical reports from the

agents of the association and from Swedish consuls abroad, and also such other information as may be of interest for Swedish manufacturers and export houses.

7. To issue catalogues in various languages, and thus carry on a propaganda abroad in favor of such Swedish goods as can be exported to advantage.

##### Organization of Association

The statutes adopted at the founding of the association were in 1908 modified in points touching its organization, and while it still keeps the principles of the above program, it is brought into greater harmony with the work of the association carried on during the years. According to the new statutes any Swedish subject or firm of good repute, Swedish business undertaking, industrial institution and bank, as also Swedish institutions and associations within and outside of Sweden, who are interested in the objects of the association and comply with its statutes, are eligible for membership. Foreign business undertakings, commercial institutions, or individuals are eligible for membership after examination by the board. Those who have rendered service to the association by demonstration of their interest are eligible for honorary membership.

##### Information Department.

The information department is the one in closest touch with the public, those who visit the offices of the association or correspond with them. The questions put to the association by the public are of the most varied nature. Swedish merchants and manufacturers apply to the association to obtain agents and buyers in foreign countries, and foreign business houses apply to the association to be placed into communication with Swedish exporters. The association also gives information concerning the standing of foreign firms, for which it charges only sufficient to pay the expenses such service involves. The association furnishes, on request, information concerning foreign countries, their communications, freights by land and by sea, packing, customs, duties, etc. It translates code telegrams, and has at its disposal for this purpose all the principal telegraph codes published.

The association also assists Swedish exporters and importers in knotty points affecting customs, which have often, thanks to the intervention of the association, been brought to a successful solution for Swedish commerce and industry. It helps Swedish inventors to get their inventions exploited abroad, gives advice to exporters concerning articles that can be exported to advantage, and suggests to manufacturers new lines of goods. Swedish commercial stipendiaries who seek to establish themselves abroad, as also Swedes who propose

making journeys in foreign countries with a view to study the local markets, receive from the association letters of recommendation to institutions, industrial concerns, commercial firms, and private persons in foreign countries with whom the association is in connection. The association also intervenes in cases of differences between Swedish and foreign business firms, with a view to settle such disputes amicably and with a minimum of expense to both parties.

The association takes a very active share in the organization of Swedish exhibitions abroad. At the great international exhibitions, such as the one held at Chicago in 1893, as at that in Copenhagen in 1888, the association carried out a large part of the work connected with the arranging and organization of the Swedish exhibits. At the exhibitions held at St. Louis in 1904 and at Liege, 1905, the official participation of Sweden was decided upon in consequence of representations made by the association, and in the case of the Liege exhibition the association had charge of the organization of the Swedish section. At the Scandinavian exhibition held in Stockholm in 1897 the association erected a special bureau within the exhibition grounds, where interested visitors could obtain all information concerning the industry and commerce of Sweden.

It should be noted that for information, advice, etc., given by the association, no charge whatever is made.

#### Commercial Library.

One aim, which is of special importance to the export association, is the formation of a national commercial library, the need of which becomes even greater in a land where commercial industry is on the increase. The library is every year increased by a large number of new books and treatises, such as new works of reference, telegraph codes, statistical works, etc., besides which there are in the library over a hundred Swedish and foreign newspapers, periodicals, and technical papers.

The library is at present arranged in the following groups: Address, trade, and industrial calendars; banking and financial matters; fisheries; commercial geography; commercial knowledge and instruction, trade politics; manufacture; agriculture; information concerning railways and means of communication; maps and plans, catalogues and price lists; legal forms; post and telegraph; communication by water; information concerning the solidity of firms, statistics; telegraph codes; journals (home and foreign), customs matters; books of reference and encyclopædias; information concerning exhibitions.

The association has had a catalogue arranged and published containing informa-

tion regarding the collection of commercial and industrial literature, etc., now in its possession. The classification of the contents of the books has been arranged in geographical subdivisions in alphabetical order, according to the different countries, so as to facilitate easy comprehension of each group.

#### Publishing Department.

The publishing branch is concerned with the publication of the organ of the association, the *Svensk Export* (Swedish Export), which treats of questions touching export, industry, and means of communication, and publishes information from the Royal Department of Foreign Affairs and the Royal Board of Trade, reports from legations, consulates, and commercial stipendaries, market reports, and other matters which may be of interest to and forward the objects of the association. The department publishes also export calendars, handbooks and other publications requisite for the work of the society.

The *Svensk Export*, which appears every other week, is intended to bring to the notice of the subscribers such items of interest in the commercial and industrial world as, being nonconfidential, can be published. Reports from Swedish consulates, supplied by the Department for Foreign Affairs, are published, as also the reports from the state commercial stipendaries. In different articles, questions of commercial, industrial, and economic nature that have a direct or indirect bearing on commercial or industrial interests are discussed by competent writers.

The journal has a notice column which gives all kinds of news and information in a concise form. The statistical division contains information about commerce, industrial and technical matters, and means of communication. A special division treats of inquiries from foreign firms concerning Swedish goods. These inquiries, published in the journal without giving the name of the inquirer, afford opportunity to those interested to form a connection, by means of the association, with the firm in question.

The journal of the association is sent free to all members of the society, to institutions allied with the General Export Association (the number of copies being in proportion to the annual subscription), to the representatives of Sweden abroad, to the members of Parliament, and to the larger newspapers and journals at home and abroad.

#### THE FINANCIAL LIBRARY OF THE NATIONAL CITY BANK.

By Florence Spencer, Librarian.

As the demand for special libraries in the financial district has increased very rapidly in the past five years, the various bank-

ing and brokerage houses have supplied them, so that the one-time familiar question, "What is a financial library?" is now seldom heard.

While we in the Wall Street district are naturally more interested in financial libraries than any others, perhaps it will be interesting to learn that the growth of special libraries has extended to all classes of commercial enterprise, and where the law library was once the only highly specialized collection commonly owned, we now have engineering libraries, architectural libraries, manufacturing and mercantile libraries, as well as those of the public utility and great industrial corporations. Each, of course, collects material to supply the special needs of the company which it serves.

Our financial library is housed in a suite of three rooms on the roof of the bank on the Wall Street side, and consists of a large filing-room, the librarian's room, and a small consultation room where those wishing to use the material in the library may work undisturbed. The filing-room contains vertical steel filing cases, the drawers of which are filled with all obtainable data on companies of every kind and size. There are over 100,000 different companies represented in these files. We strive to obtain full particulars of each of these companies, and a complete record would have copies of its articles of incorporation, mortgages, annual reports, dividend records, agreements, and current gossip as contained in trade journals and the daily newspapers. As each year goes by, the record for a given company increases, and in some of the older and more important corporations our record is a complete story of its origin and growth. On one side of the filing-room is the catalogue containing all index cards of the names of companies about which information is preserved in the library, and a concise record of the material on file of that company is entered on the cards.

Several cases in the filing-room are devoted to files of the weekly financial papers, and a collection of various quotation sheets covering bond and stock market values for a number of years. On a large rack are hung each day the quotation sheets from all the principal exchanges of the United States and Europe—about thirty in the United States and twelve in Europe—also daily sheets from the Honolulu Stock Exchange and weekly sheets from Buenos Aires. These are all filed away and kept year after year.

On the shelves covering the walls of the two large rooms are over 5,000 books and pamphlets, which may be described in groups. Reports from every state in the Union covering the banking, insurance, and

railroad statistics of each state, bound periodicals—both American and English—covering the activities of the financial, railroad and general engineering world, manuals and directories, year-books, government reports and bulletins, dictionaries, the Encyclopaedia Britannica (latest edition), and a large number of miscellaneous books and pamphlets covering a great variety of subjects. There is also a large five-volume atlas giving the location of every bank and trust company in Manhattan and the Bronx.

Now how is all this material obtained?

The question can be best answered by giving a slight outline of the day's work.

The first duty of the day is to clip seven New York morning papers, and one daily paper from each of the following cities: Chicago, St. Louis, Boston and London. All editorials and clippings covering general national and international commerce and financial conditions and those on various changes in the most important companies are given (when properly stamped and dated) over to be "boiled down" and typed in a concise manner for the perusal of the President of the bank—the remaining clippings also being sent down to the President's office or platform for the use of anyone who wishes to read them.

All clippings on receiverships, reorganizations, called bonds, meetings, dividend notices, etc., are sent each morning to the "Customers Securities" and "Bond Cage." All clippings on domestic banks are sent to the Credit Department for perusal, and clippings on new foreign banks to the Foreign Exchange.

While this is being done a note has been made of everything mentioned in the papers which would be of service in the library in printed form, and immediately afterwards letters are written asking for the material, and are sent out in the mail, or taken by messenger—according to importance and location. Correspondence cards are kept, duly dated and stamped, on which is entered a complete record of the request and the reply.

In some cases information is refused by companies, and the information is supplied (in as complete a way as possible) by news clippings and periodical references. On Mondays the weekly Financial and Commercial Chronicle is checked and indexed, and this is another means of ready reference.

In the meantime the material requested in letters of the day or two before is coming in rapidly and must be checked up, properly entered and filed. The returned clippings gleaned out, numbered, pasted on manila sheets and filed by company, follow-up letters sent to reluctant contributors who may have neglected to answer our re-

quests, old material checked up as it is taken out and re-checked as it is returned, and through the steady routine is a never-ending series of requests which demands some reference work.

While the library is one of the departments of the bank and as such is not open to the general public, anyone outside the bank, who is properly vouched for, may have the courtesies of the library extended to him on occasion, and a cordial co-operative spirit obtains among the various financial librarians of the city who are always ready to lend material and help each other in case of need.

#### SELECT LIST OF REFERENCES ON SPECIAL LIBRARIES

Compiled under the direction of H. H. B. Meyer, Chief Bibliographer, Library of Congress.

This list is made up of articles descriptive of the purpose, organization, and methods of special libraries. It is necessarily confined to those special libraries which have been described in print, and by no means represents the number of special libraries now scattered throughout the country. A list of these will be found in the directories mentioned below.

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